

A BELL BOY'S LIFE.

Bill Nye Extracts From One Urchin A Chunk of Real Romance.

HIS FIRST WICKED EMPLOYER

And His Hearty Indorsement of the Imported Habit of Tipping.

A WET WELCOME FROM A DEAR GUEST

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)

HE hotel bell boy has never had what might be called a fair show in the columns of the press. He has not been interviewed, and not being a voter, his appeals for recognition have never been listened to. The bell boy is the connecting link between the upper and lower order of beings at a hotel, that is, he fills the order after it is given.

Yesterday I detailed a bell boy with red hair who came to bring me a pitcher of ice water, and asked him if he would mind being interviewed for publication. He said he would not, but would have to wait until 6 o'clock, at which time his day's work closed, and he would be at leisure.

At that medium sized boy, but older than I thought at first. He might be anywhere from 5 to 30 years old. Sometimes he looked one way and sometimes the other. He said he had been in the business all his life. The first day he worked he cried a good deal for his mother and still feels kind of hungry for the boyhood he never had.

"Would you mind telling me your name, my son?" I queried in superior accents.

"My name is Henry Clay Williams. Here my name is Front."

"What would you do if you had your time for a year?"

"I would play. Never played a day in my life that I can remember. Jest polish my trousers on a sutter and wait till the office boilers 'front,' and then I've got to run up five or six flights, knock on the door, and find that some pestilence of a fellow has forgot what it was he rang for. That's what puts the grey hairs into a boy's head."

MEMORIES OF A DELIGHTED LIFE.

"Who did you work for first?"

"I worked for a couple of fellows that ran the Palace Hotel. I won't tell you the name of the town and I won't tell you the name of the firm. I used to call 'em Messrs. Dewey Little & Owen Moore. That's what I called 'em. Their hotel was called the Palace because the man that named it was a humorist. It was hanted, the house was. Rights it was hanted by wicked spirits and days it was hanted with the spooks of departed billed dinners. Did you ever run across the ghost of a billed dinner? I think it is the saddest sight I ever smelled."

"How did you come to take hold of the hotel business?"

"Well, my mother died just as I got out of skirts, and my father was a poor hand at the practice of industry himself, but had the theory all right, and could find openings for other folks' bills. He got me the job at the Palace. He then began to rest. He died most of his resting in the barroom of the Palace. He said once that he had read in a paper somewhere that the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. He didn't want the earth, he said, but if there was any fullness left over he would be glad to get enough for a grown person."

"Where is your father now?"

"He is busy just now filling a drunkard's grave. It is the first opening he ever filled with any kind of satisfaction. If my father

had put the talent into most anything else that he did into bowlins' he would have been a rich man and I could have got out in the grass and played and had fun, instead of getting kneesprung here in a hot hotel, breathing gas leaks and sewer gas, while other boys are chasing squirrels."

"You didn't like the Palace?"

"No, I did not like the Palace."

"Why not?"

"Well, the proprietors were close, too."



Nye Converses With the Bell Boy.

close to suit me. Old Dewey Little was the meanest man I ever saw. He used to gum up the gas burners so that a guest couldn't see to read, and then of course would have to come down stairs and maybe spend a dollar at the bar. He was the meanest man than ever walked. He used to steal wiper out of the wash and go through the pockets of the overcoats in the check room.

NOT FAR BEHIND SATAN.

"I've read a good many stories about Satan, and of course he has had advantages that Old Man Little never had. Satan has had thousands of years to think it over and improve on his first amateur work, and so I say that it would be hard for anybody to take his place, but I say this, that if he should ever get disabled or have a felon on his thumb or anything like that and want a good understudy, Dewey Little could run things so that only a few heads of departments you know would get onto the fact."

"What do you think of tipping in America?"

"Well, I think it's just getting on its feet, and getting to be self-supporting. But it ain't what it ought to be. In the old countries everybody tips a little, but here it is only the liberal folks that does it, and so they are overworked. We would rather get a nickel a head all day than to get a quarter from one or two. Outside of the big cities, tips are mighty seldom, you bet. Here in New York it is getting to be pretty good. I've made a dollar a day quite often outside of my regular pay, which pay is

resenting the Bell Boy's Intrusion.

bags. You can't always tell by clothes, but baggage means a good deal. Fresh people have fresh looking, shiny baggage. Experienced travelers have sensible, but more or less weather-beaten bags and trunks."

"What is the general failing among guests?"

"The general failing is to return the key to the room. I went up with a man yesterday that said his key didn't fit and he couldn't open his door. When I looked at the key I saw it belonged in Philadelphia. He laughed kind of foolish and pulled out the right one, as he supposed, but it belonged to Young's Hotel in Boston. He had a key in every pocket that belonged to some other hotel. Then some folk get the number of their room mixed up with the number they had perhaps in another city a day or two before. We had a case of that kind last week, and it would have made a great deal of trouble if the matter had not been hushed up at the office."

"What do you do when a guest enters the hotel?"

"Why 'front,' whoever 'front' happens to be at the time, is expected to go and pull the handle of the guest's bag, carry it away and conceal it somewhere, and then reluctantly find it when the owner puts up for it."

"Do you have many squabbles with the other bell boys?"

"No, we get along all right and have no fuss. We swap stories, too, when we have a slack day, and get a little fun that way."

The Mellow-Voiced Orator's Order.

pretty blamed small. Bell boys watch the office mellow close, I tell you, and some rooms we fight over, while others get mighty slow service."

"What was your best tip?"

"Well, it was a dollar, I believe. We had a temperance lecturer in No. 39. He was reformed temperance lecturer. That is, he had been a rouser and so finally he had braced up, it seems, and went onto the platform. He done well as a lecturer, all allowed, and great crowds came to hear the man who had been jerked out of the gutter. I was sent to answer his bell. He looked at me kind of skittish, and then he walked the door quite a spell and looked out at the winder. Finally he wanted to know if I was to be relied on to transact business with-out too much conversation. I said yes, and that I had the secrets of great men and great actresses looked up in my breast and that I had a time lock on it and that the world wouldn't know anything about it till Gabriel said so."

SOME QUEER EXPERIENCES.

And then the reformed lecturer told me to bring up an Apollinaris bottle full of common cooking whisky and a high glass. I done so, and people that went to the lecture said it just laid over anything they ever heard as regards beseechin' tenderness and all that kind of business. He was a wet-eyed lecturer with a wabble in his voice, and he could gather in a great many children and young ladies when he got tuned up. He gave me a dollar for working the Apollinaris racket."

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A WOODCOCK'S GAME.

An American Bird That Plays With Amateur Sportsmen.

ITS HAUNTS AND ITS HABITS.

Places Around Conneaut Lake Where It May Be Brought Down.

THE HUNTER MUST BE A WARY ONE

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)

THE woodcock is a very tricky bird, as I once found by experience. When a small lad, wandering in the fields one day in early summer, I flushed one of these birds, which started skimming along the top of the weeds and bushes, and finally, when about 20 yards away, fluttered, as though it were maimed, and fell in the grass. I quickly started in pursuit, but when I approached near, up it rose again and fluttered away in an apparently badly crippled condition a little way off, when it dropped again. Eager to pursue I panted after, and was led a wild goose chase, for the next time it rose away it flew as if it would have been miraculously cured, and it never felt better in its life. So thoroughly was I deceived, that when the thought came to me that I had read of birds feigning a crippled condition, for the purpose of leading you away from their nests, I was amazed at the perfect deception that had been practiced upon me; and when I turned to find a landmark to guide me to the spot where I had flushed it, I found I had been led through such a tortuous maze of jungle that the attempt was hopeless. Does instinct prompt such a wonderful display of intelligence, or is it pure and unadulterated reasoning? Who can answer?

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